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REVIEW

Music DVD Review: *Oscar Peterson Trio: The Berlin Concert*

Written by [Eric Friesen](#)
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Canadian jazz legend [Oscar Peterson](#) has impeccable chops as a pianist and composer, and from the time he was discovered by Norman Granz while playing a live radio show in Montreal in 1949, Peterson had been recognized as one of the great players in jazz. *Oscar Peterson Trio: The Berlin Concert* offers jazz fans an intimate front-row seat at one of his many great performances.

Recorded live on June 2nd, 1985, *The Berlin Concert* features Peterson with bassist Niels-Henning Oersted Pederson and drummer Martin Drew. The production is appropriately restrained, allowing the music and the interplay between the musicians to shine. The camera-work is subtle and unobtrusive, while the editing mixes two- and three-shots of the band with closeups of the individual musicians, giving the viewer time to appreciate the absolute control they have over their instruments.

Peterson, of course, is the one that Berliners were there to see that night in 1985, and he gave them a show that none of them will have soon forgotten. More than twenty years later, this live DVD gives fans an opportunity to share in the excitement of that evening. You can hear Peterson humming and scatting along with his intricate solos as though you were standing next to the piano. You can watch the musicians as they make eye contact and subtly cue each other, weaving their respective instruments in and out of the music. Throughout the 80-minute concert, Peterson's hands rarely stop moving across the keyboard. Occasionally, he uses one hand to mop his brow with a handkerchief, while the other hand continues playing.



Highlights include the 15-minute opening piece "Salute to Bach" and "Blues Etude", a blisteringly fast tune that is introduced by the rhythm section while Peterson takes a moment offstage. For the entire length of the song, the trio keeps the energy at a fever pitch, even as the dynamics rise and fall. At one point, Peterson takes an extended solo featuring some amazing left-hand work that one almost has to see to believe.

While those songs stand out for this reviewer, the rest of the concert is excellent. The setlist also includes "Who Can I Turn To", "Yours Is My Heart Alone", "Falling In Love With La Belle Province", "Nigerian Marketplace", "Cakewalk", "Skylark-My Foolish Heart", "Perdido", and the concert closer "Caravan".

Oscar Peterson Trio: The Berlin Concert was produced by German label inakustik and is being distributed in the U.S. by MVD Entertainment Group. It will be released on Tuesday, March 13th.

This DVD will be an essential purchase for Peterson fans. For those jazz fans who are less familiar with his music, it would make a great introduction to the work of a jazz legend.

Eric lives in Winnipeg, where most days it is probably not as cold as you think it is. He writes about television, advertising, the internet, and whatever else he finds interesting at backwardfive.com.

Comments

#1 – March 15, 2007 @ 21:12PM – Connie Phillips [\[URL\]](#)

Congrats! This article has been forwarded to the [Advance.net websites](#) and [Boston.com](#) (going live soon).

#2 – March 15, 2007 @ 22:01PM – Eric Friesen [\[URL\]](#)

Cool! Thanks, Connie.

